

DECORATIVE TRIM FOR ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

5 This application claims the benefit under 35 USC 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/469,461, filed May 9, 2003, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates generally to decorative trim in the nature of architectural moldings, and more particularly to an easily attachable/detachable decorative trim for decorating walls or other architectural structures.

DISCUSSION OF RELATED ART

15 Decorative trim for architectural structures, such as interior walls of a room in a building, typically includes chair rail and crown moldings, door and window casings, baseboards, etc. all usually made of wood, as commonly known in the construction industry. Such trim typically includes a relatively flat back surface and a front surface that provides a visually appealing decorative appearance. The back
20 surface and/or sides are used for attaching the trim to an interior wall surface, etc. The decorative front surface is usually formed in three dimensions.

 The costs of commonly used wooden moldings are becoming unacceptably

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high due to the labor-intensive nature of the milling process used to create the decorative surface and the gradual depletion of suitable forest wood stocks. Additionally, wooden molding typically must be clear of knots and must be of suitable consistency to produce a smooth finish surface. Furthermore, such wooden

5 moldings tend to shrink and may crack or chip during handling and installation.

Solid plaster moldings are an alternative to wooden moldings. Use of plaster allows for easy formation of moldings having complex decorative surfaces by hardening a liquid plaster mixture in a mold, which may be as complex as desired. Such moldings are installed and painted on site, and therefore tend to suffer from

10 handling during installation, which can result in substantial damage due to the brittle nature of hardened plaster. A relatively high degree of skill is necessary to produce the molds and to install the molding correctly without damaging the decorative surface.

Alternatives to wooden and plaster moldings include solid plastic and

15 extruded polystyrene moldings. In general, extruded plastic moldings are not preferred over wood moldings due to the inability to finish joints properly. Also, potentially toxic fumes are produced during fires, and there is very little comparative cost advantage in using plastic moldings.

It will be appreciated that the manufacture, handling and installation of all

20 such rigid moldings involve significant expense, skilled labor and expertise. In most cases, a finish carpenter or experienced home improvement expert must be hired to perform the installation. In particular, specialized tools and expertise are required to effect the mitered and/or coped joints typically required at interior and exterior

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corners, or the scarf joints sometimes required therebetween, for installation of such rigid moldings.

Such molding is typically fastened to a wall or other surface with permanent fasteners, such as nails, construction adhesive, and the like. Accordingly, such molding, once installed, becomes a fixture of the building, is intended to remain in place for the duration of the room, and is therefore permanent in nature. Such molding is not readily attachable/detachable to a wall or similar surfaces. Similarly, conventional wallpaper borders exist that include an adhesive that is used to permanently adhere the border to a wall, making the wallpaper border a fixture of the building.

SUMMARY

The present invention provides easily attachable/detachable decorative trim for architectural structures. The decorative trim may be used instead of traditional moldings/trim, or as supplementary ornamentation thereto. The decorative trim includes a border having a decorative front side, and a back side including an easily releasable fastener, such as a hook and/or loop fastener of a hook and loop fastener system. Such easily releasable fasteners are intended to provide for easy attachment, detachment, and reattachment without damage to the structure of the fastener or mounting surfaces. The border preferably has at least one piece of hook or loop fastener that is substantially continuous along the length of the border. The border is constructed of a supple material, such as clothing, upholstery or drapery quality cloth or fabric, capable of conforming to irregularities in wall surfaces and is

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bendable around and/or is otherwise conformable into and around inside and outside wall-to-wall and wall-to-ceiling corners, etc. The supple, flexible nature of the trim member therefore simplifies installation to the point that it may be readily accomplished by a relatively inexperienced homeowner. Further, it allows a continuous piece of the trim member to extend across an inside or outside corner without complex mitered, cope, scarf or other joints, scribing, etc., and the special tools required to make such joints in rigid moldings; instead the supple border/trim member conforms to corners and to any bumps, swells, or irregularities in wall and/or ceiling surfaces. Trimming of the trim members may typically be performed with commonplace household scissors.

As part of the decorative trim system, or a decorative trim kit, easily releasable, wall-attachable fasteners are provided. Such wall-attachable fasteners are complementary to the easily releasable fastener of the decorative trim member, such as a complementary patch of the hook and loop fastener. Such fasteners may be adapted for attachment to the wall/building by providing an activatable, pre-glued backing or a pressure sensitive adhesive backing covered by a peelable release sheet, or by providing a fastener having one or more central openings for admitting passage of a staple, tack, screw or other similar mechanical fastener. A plurality of discrete fasteners may be provided for attachment to a wall, etc.

The trim kit may further include an additional, decorative trim member i.e., multiple trim members, each having a distinct visual appearance. Individual trim members of the kit may optionally be used interchangeably. Specifically, a first trim member may be disconnected from the wall-attached fasteners, and a visually

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distinct second trim member may be connected to those fasteners to impart a different aesthetic effect. Accordingly, a different decorative theme can be presented by merely removing/disconnecting a trim member relating to one theme, and applying/connecting a trim member of a different theme, while using the same wall-attached, easily releasable fasteners.

The wall-attachable fasteners are thereby permanently or semi-permanently secured to the wall, etc., and the trim member is thereby readily, easily and removably applied to or removed from the wall-attachable fastener(s). This allows for placement of the trim member with a simple press-on application, and correspondingly simple removal. Accordingly, the trim member can be attached with little effort, pulled away and repeatedly repositioned until the desired effect is achieved. Furthermore, the trim member can be removed without damage to the wall or trim member, and optionally, may be replaced with a similar trim member providing a visually distinct appearance. For example, this allows for easy, tool-free changing of trim members by an average homeowner, etc. to provide varying decorative themes, e.g. seasonal themes, holiday themes, etc.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the following drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary decorative trim member, shown attached to two contiguous walls adjacent a ceiling;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the trim member of FIG. 1, shown attached to

two contiguous walls below a conventional wooden crown molding;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the trim member of FIG. 1, shown attached to a wall below a traditional chair rail molding, and abutting a door casing molding;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the trim being shown member of FIG. 1, shown
5 partially attached to a wall, a portion of the left side of the trim being shown unattached and hanging downwards to expose its back side;

FIG. 5A and FIG. 5B are enlarged front and back views, respectively, of the wall-attachable easily releasable fastener of Fig. 4; and

FIGs. 6-11 are partial plan views of alternative exemplary embodiments of a
10 decorative trim member in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to Figures 1-5B, the decorative trim system of the present invention is now described. As best shown in Figures 1-4, the exemplary decorative trim
15 system includes a trim member 20 and at least one easily releasable fastener 40b that is adapted for attachment to a wall or other surface of an architectural structure.

As best shown in Figure 4, the trim member 20 includes an elongated border 20a having a front side 22 providing a desired decorative appearance, and a back side 24 opposite the front side (the trim member being folded over to show the back
20 side 24 of the border 20a. The border 20a is constructed of a supple material that is sufficiently flexible, or non-rigid, to render the border 20a capable of substantially conforming to an inside or outside corner formed by substantially planar surfaces intersecting at substantially ninety degrees, e.g. at an intersection of two adjacent

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walls (see Figures 1, 2 and 4), or at any other angle customary in wall construction. Preferably, the supple material is sufficiently flexible to permit it to conform to a ninety degree corner with a bend radius of less than one inch. More preferably, the material is capable of doing so with a bend radius of less than one-half inch, or more preferably, less than one-quarter inch. Preferably, such conforming occurs without any apparent permanent deformation, e.g. cracks or other damage, of the supple material. Accordingly, the supple material permits the border 20a to bend around and conform closely to any irregular contours of a wall or similar surface, as well as bend around and conform closely to inside and outside corners formed at junctions of walls, as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 4.

Various materials are sufficiently supple to provide this desired functionality, and any suitable supple material may be used. By way of a non-limiting example, the supple material may be, or may include, a woven or non-woven fabric or cloth, such as clothing grade, upholstery grade or drapery grade fabrics/cloths, other materials including acetate, vinyl, paper, acrylic, silk, lace, felt, leather, or other similar materials. The material may have a color, pattern and/or texture selected to complement other upholstery and textile accessories in a room.

Referring again to Figure 4, the back side 24 of the border 20a includes an easily releasable fastener 40b that is complementary to, and therefore matable with, the wall-attachable easily releasable fastener 40a shown in Figures 4, 5A and 5B. Any suitable non-permanent, easily releasable fastener may be used. For example, the releasable fasteners 40a, 40b may each be one of two complementary portions of a complementary fastener system, such as a hook or loop portion of a hook and

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loop fastener system of a type well-known in the art, such as that sold under the trademark Velcro®. Alternatively, snaps or similar fasteners may be used as complementary, easily releasable fasteners. In the embodiment shown in Figure 4, the border 20a has at least one elongated strip of hook or loop fastener (hooks in
5 Figure 4) that is preferably continuous or substantially continuous as it extends along the length of the border 20a in its direction of elongation X (see Figure 1). This fastener 40b is preferably a discrete member that is attached to the back side 24 of the border 20a by stitching, heat fusing, adhesive, or any other suitable means (see, e.g. Figures 4 and 6). For example, a 0.75 inch wide strip of commercially available
10 heavy duty Hook #88 hooks has been found suitable for this purpose.

In an alternative embodiment (not shown), the entire back side 24 of the border 20a includes either hooks or loops of a hook and loop fastener system, e.g. by using the backing of the hook or loop fastener as one of the layers of the trim member 20, as discussed below. In one embodiment the back side 24 of the border
15 20a includes a conventional laminated loop fabric that is designed to mate with hooks of a hook and loop fastener system. For example, such a fabric is sold under the trademark VELTEX®. Such fabric may also be used in strip form, as shown in Figure 4. This may reduce or eliminate the need for careful alignment of the wall-attachable fasteners on the wall, etc., while allowing a broad range of flexibility for
20 ensuring that the trim member is properly positioned on the wall.

As discussed above, the wall-attachable releasable fastener 40a is matable with the releasable fastener 40b of the trim member 20, and is configured for attachment to the wall/building. For example, the wall-attachable releasable

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fastener 40a may have any shape and may include a patch of the either the hook portion of the loop portion of a hook and loop fastener (loops in Figure 5A) that is complementary to a patch of hook or loop fastener of the trim member 20. The hooks or loops are provided on one side 42 of the wall-attachable fastener 40a, and
5 the opposite side 44 is attachable to a wall, etc. Exemplary pre-cut, circular fasteners are sold under the trademark VELCOIN®. By way of example, a 0.75 inch diameter fastener with Hook #88 heavy duty hooks has been found suitable for this purpose. In the embodiment of Figure 5A, the fastener is configured to define an internal opening 46 for admitting passage therethrough of a mechanical fastener,
10 such as a staple, tack, screw, etc., for attaching the fastener 40a to a wall, etc. In the embodiment of Figure 5B, the opposite side 44 of the fastener 40a is provided with a pressure sensitive adhesive backing 48 covered by a release sheet 50 that is peelably removable to expose the adhesive backing 48 to permit attaching of the fastener 40a to the wall, etc. For example, a high-tack, quick setting adhesive
15 achieving 90% bond strength in about an hour, and having a temperature operating range from 0°F to 160°F has been found suitable for this purpose. Such an adhesive is sold under the trademark TEMPO™ 114, and is commercially available on products sold under the VELCRO® trademark.

The border 20a may be imparted with a perceivable depth to provide an
20 aesthetic effect analogous to the three-dimensional contours typical of milled wooden or molded plaster moldings by providing multiple layers of materials. Exemplary borders including multiple layers of materials are shown in FIGs. 1-4, 7, 8 and 11. The border 20a may include multiple overlapping layers, with a first layer

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and 11. The border 20a may include multiple overlapping layers, with a first layer being positioned over a second layer to at least partially reveal the second layer beneath the first layer. For example, in FIGs 1-4, a first layer of cloth 28 is positioned over a second layer of felt 30 to partially reveal the felt layer. In FIG. 7, a first layer of upholstery fringe 33 is positioned over a second layer of woven fabric 31. FIG. 8 shows a layered border constructed of an acrylic ribbon 35 and overlapping trim 37. In FIG 11, a first layer of lace 32 is positioned over a second layer of woven fabric 31a. The border may include layering of dissimilar materials, such as cloth, fabric, paper, lace, felt, acetates, vinyl, plastic, etc., as discussed above. Alternatively, this may include layering of similar materials having different colors or patterns creating visual contrast, e.g. red felt over green felt. Additionally, cut lines or other shaping of one layer relative to another may enhance the visual contrast, as shown in FIG. 1.

The border 20a may include repetitive patterns or may have openwork areas that include open portions that will reveal a wall underneath the border 20a. FIG. 9 shows an openwork border constructed of acetate or vinyl 38. FIG. 10 shows an openwork border constructed of paper 39. This further enhances the available range of creative versatility.

A horizontal line of braided or twisted cording or gimp, such as upholstery trim, piping, braiding, loops, weavings, yarn or ribbon or other trim of a type used in the furniture, clothing or decorating industries. For example, such trim may include fringe, tassels, paper, thread, metal, glass, beading, lacing, jewelry or any other popular or vintage trend. Any such trim may be used to define the top or bottom rim

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of the border 20a, as shown in FIGs. 1-4, 6, 7, 8, and 11. By way example, an upholstery cording 34 is provided in the borders of FIGs. 1-4, 6, 7 and 11. FIG. 8 shows an exemplary pleated silk 36 border 20a including an upholstery gimp 37.

5 Additionally, metal, wood, plastic or other rigid elements may be included in the border, such as beads, tassels, or similar ornamentation, provided that they do not prevent the border from being able to conform to and extend around inside and outside corners, as discussed above and as shown in FIGs. 6 and 11. FIG. 11 shows a layered border including glass beads 60 and metal charms 62.

10 In a certain embodiment, the trim member 20 includes an elongated strip of releasable fastener 40b, and the wall-attachable releasable fastener includes a plurality of discrete fasteners 40a, as shown in Figures 4 and 5A. This requires relatively less fastener material on the wall, and therefore has a lesser impact on the appearance and/or integrity of the wall, and eases installation. Alternatively, an elongated strip of wall-attachable releasable fastener may be used.

15 Each border may be pre-cut to a shape corresponding to its design (see Figures 1-4). The desired length of the trim member may be obtained by trimming an excessively long length of trim member 20, e.g. a length of approximately 20 feet to approximately 50 feet, to a length required for a particular room. Such long lengths may advantageously be sold in the form of a roll. Because the trim member
20 20/border 20a is constructed of supple material, such trimming can typically be accomplished with household scissors.

Alternatively, the decorative trim member 20 is pre-fabricated and sold in various relatively short segments (e.g. anywhere between 3 and 8 feet in length) that

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may be joined or overlapped. For example, the short segments may be sold in a common package, e.g. as a kit. Alternatively, a longer roll may be included in the kit.

Any conventional packaging may be used for the kit. Joints between segments/ends may be concealed by overlapping the segments/ends to allow the

5 border to be any length to fit a designated space. Accordingly, there is no need to paint or finish the ends as for traditional crown molding. The joints may optionally be secured by releasable fasteners, such as a hook and loop fastener system.

A decorative trim kit includes at least one decorative trim member (or multiple segments of a single decorative trim member), and a corresponding easily

10 releasable fastener adapted for attachment to a wall or similar surface. The wall-attachable fastener is complementary to the easily releasable fastener of the decorative trim member, such as a complementary patch of the hook and/or loop fastener. Preferably, a plurality of discrete, easily releasable wall-attachable fasteners are included in the kit. The decorative trim kit may further include

15 additional, i.e. multiple, decorative trim members, each having a visually distinct appearance. Individual trim members of the kit may thereby be used

interchangeably to vary the corresponding decorative effect. Accordingly, an entirely different decorative theme can be presented by merely detaching a trim member relating to one theme, and attaching a trim member of a different theme, while using

20 the same wall-attached, easy release fasteners. Optionally, scissors or another cutting tool, and/or nails, screws or other mechanical fasteners for attaching the wall-attachable fasteners, may be included in the kit.

In use, the trim members and wall-mountable complementary fasteners

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described above can be used to decorate an architectural structure having a wall or similar surface of an architectural structure (collectively, "wall") by attaching the complementary releasable fastener(s) 40a to the wall, and then mating the releasable fastener 40b of the trim member 20 to the complementary releasable fastener(s) 40a to attach the trim member 20 to the wall. One or a plurality of discrete wall-mountable complementary fasteners 40a may be used.

Attaching the wall-mountable fastener(s) 40a involves positioning the fastener(s) 40a along the wall, etc. at a location where it is desired to apply the decorative trim member 20 (see Figures 1 and 4). The fasteners 40a are positioned on the wall to align with the fastener(s) 40b of the trim member 20 when the trim member 20 is in the desired location. By way of example, the decorative border can be added to existing crown molding, e.g. below and adjacent to or directly attached to such crown molding as shown in Figure 2, or be used as an alternative thereto as shown in Figures 1 and 4. Alternatively, the trim member may be used as a chair rail type molding (see Figure 3), as window casing or door trim, or as otherwise found aesthetically pleasing. This positioning of the fastener(s) involves permanently or semi-permanently attachment to the wall, etc., e.g. by adhesive, staple(s), tack(s), screw(s), or the like. This may involve driving a mechanical fastener through an opening of the fastener 40a to secure the fastener 40a to the wall.

In a preferred embodiment, each trim member 20 has a hook or loop type fastener as shown in FIG. 4. This allows the trim member to be easily and quickly pressed on and peeled off the wall. Accordingly, once the wall-mountable fasteners

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are in place, the trim member 20 can be attached to the wall via the fastener with little effort. Additionally, the trim member may be pulled away from the wall-mounted fastener(s) and repeatedly repositioned to engage and disengage the fasteners 40a, 40b until the desired placement and effect is achieved, at which time the trim

5 member 20 is permitted to hang from the fasteners 40a, thereby adding decorative flair to a wall, etc.

When the architectural structure includes a second wall intersecting a first wall to form a corner, the attaching of the decorative trim further includes attaching the complementary releasable fastener(s) 40a to the second wall, and bending the
10 trim member 20 to substantially conform to the corner, and mating the releasable fastener 40b of the trim member 20 to the complementary releasable fastener 40a to attach the trim member to the second wall, as best shown in Figures 1 and 2.

In contrast with traditional crown molding that is installed in such a manner that it becomes a permanent fixture of a building, the hook and loop or other
15 releasable fasteners allow the trim member 20 to be removable or exchangeable once in place, as shown in FIG. 4. A first trim member may be removed and replaced with a second trim member, e.g. one that provides a different aesthetic appearance. Accordingly, a first trim member having a certain visual appearance may be removed and replaced with a second trim member having a visually distinct
20 appearance. The method may therefore involve unmating the releasable fastener 40b of the trim member 20 from the complementary releasable fastener 40a to remove the trim member from the wall, and mating the releasable fastener 40b of a second trim member to the complementary releasable fastener 40a to attach the

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second trim member to the wall. Thus, the decorative trim provides an effective way to decorate using interchangeable thematic trims. For example, themes relating to holidays or the four seasons could be attached, later removed and put in safekeeping for a following year. Decorative trim complementary to curtains or drapes, upholstery, or linens in a particular room may be provided. Additionally, the trim members may be easily changed when these other design elements are changed.

The pre-designed, and pre-hooked and/or pre-looped nature of the decorative trim member(s) and fasteners facilitates installation. The decorative trim can therefore be installed quickly and efficiently without aggravation, and without the need for special tools or installation skills.

The decorative trim member can extend along the edge of a ceiling to effect a straight edge, much in the same way as traditional crown molding. In this manner, the flexible molding system may be used as an alternative to traditional crown molding. FIG. 1 shows how this decorative trim member can be used to hide a cut of wallpaper or the ending of a paint line on a wall, adjacent a ceiling, in much the same way as traditional wooden crown molding.

FIG. 2 and FIG. 3 illustrate how the trim member 20 may also be used in conjunction with traditional crown 70 and chair rail 80 moldings to provide an enhanced decorative effect.

When the decorative trim member 20 will abut a door, window or other structure, or trim molding thereof (see casing 90, Figure 3), the decorative trim member may simply be trimmed to an appropriate length by cutting with common

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household scissors, shears, etc. If the decorative trim member 20 includes a fabric or other member that is woven, knitted, twisted or is constructed so as to tend to fray at a cut end, the cut edge may be fused, melted, or coated with an adhesive, etc. to prevent fraying. Alternatively, the trim member may be connected at its ends with
5 hook and loop or other fasteners.

As shown in FIGs. 1, 2 and 4, the supple, flexible nature of the materials of the border 20a allows the trim member 20 to conform to inside and outside corners, irregularities in substantially flat walls and ceilings, etc. This eliminates the need for mitering, coping, scribing, etc. that is associated with installation of rigid molding.

10 This is particularly true for most cloth and fabric materials, and materials that are similarly supple/flexible.

From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that the decorative trim of the present invention provides an easy-to-install, prefabricated, decorative wall trim alternative. The supple nature of the decorative trim simplifies application into
15 corners and other normally difficult trim situations associated with wooden or other traditional rigid moldings. The releasable nature of the fasteners allows for easy installation, without help from a hired professional, and allows for easy interchange of trim members to provide a variety of thematic applications over time, e.g. to accommodate seasonal trends or for other personal reasons and taste.

20 Having thus described particular embodiments of the invention, various alterations, modifications, and improvements will readily occur to those skilled in the art. For example, the border may be provided with an easily releasable and/or reusable adhesive that provide temporary, non-permanent bonding to a wall etc.,

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adhered directly to a wall, and would be selectively removable without significant damage to the wall or the border. Such alterations, modifications and improvements as are made obvious by this disclosure are intended to be part of this description though not expressly stated herein, and are intended to be within the spirit and

5 scope of the invention. Accordingly, the foregoing description is by way of example only, and not limiting. The invention is limited only as defined in the following claims and equivalents thereto.